

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 AID-05 CIAE-00

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P R 051505Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3425

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 4261

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, CG

SUBJECT: CABINDAN REFUGEES IN ZAIRE

REF: KINSHASA 3594 B) STATE 098563

1. EMBASSY WELCOMES VISIT TO ZAIRE BY SHEPARD LOWMAN DURING LATTER PART OF MAY. IF PRACTICABLE, A VISIT OF FIVE DAYS TO THE TSHELA AREA SHOULD BE PLANNED TO PROVIDE LOWMAN FIRST-HAND EXPOSURE FOR THE PROBLEM. HOWEVER, WISH TO POINT OUT THAT INTELLIGENCE REPORTS INDICATE INCREASED MILITARY ACTIVITY ALONG THE BORDER. FEASIBILITY OF A TRIP TO TSHELA WOULD THUS DEPEND ON LOCAL SITUATION IN ADDITION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE REACTION AT THAT TIME. EVEN IF TRIP TO TSHELA NOT POSSIBLE, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR LOWMAN TO COME TO KINSHASA AND EXPLORE CABINDAN REFUGEE PROBLEM WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS UNHCR LOCAL REPRESENTATION AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

2. IT IS EMBASSY'S IMPRESSION THAT ONLY WITH DIFFICULTY COULD A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL VEHICLES BE ASSEMBLED IN THE BAS FLEUVE SUB-REGION TO AFFECT
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RELOCATION OF CABINDAN REFUGEES TO RESETTLEMENT SITES. FROM RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH LOCAL UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE NOEL, HOWEVER, EMBASSY OFFICERS JUDGE THAT UNHCR PROBABLY HAS SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT SUCH AN OPERATION. A VERY REAL PROBLEM SEEMS TO BE THAT THE UNHCR IS WAITING FOR THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO MOVE THE REFUGEES WHILE THE LOCAL

AUTHORITIES DISPLAY NO REAL INTENTION OF DOING SO.
POLITICAL MOTIVE ASIDE, THEIR HESITATION MAY BE
BASED IN PART ON SHORTAGE OF GOOD, ARABLE LAND.
MOVING MORE REFUGEES TO THE INTERIOR WOULD CREATE
FURTHER PRESSURE ON THE LAND.

3. RE PARA 2 REFTTEL B, LOCAL IRC REPRESENTATIVE
ERJAVEC AND BELGIAN ASSISTANCE DOCTOR BADOUX, LOCATED
AT KUIMBA HOSPITAL, HAVE PROPOSED TO MR. NOEL THAT
UNHCR CHANNEL FOOD TO THE REFUGEES NEAR THE BORDER
THROUGH PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE
HOSPITAL. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, UNHCR HAS
NOT YET PROVIDED A DEFINITIVE RESPONSE TO THIS
PROPOSAL. FYI WE UNDERSTAND NOEL MAY BE SERIOUSLY
ILL. THIS COULDEXPLAIN IN PART ABSENCE OF RESPONSE
TO PROPOSAL MADE BE ERJAVEC AND BADOUX END FYI:
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